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THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION OF NURSES

BY HARRIET CAMP LOUNSBERY

JUDGING from the great number of names on the waiting-lists of our training-schools the time has arrived when we should be able to select only those who will make the very best nurses.

The educated woman, plus the training now given in our best schools, should raise our profession to its highest point.

Good health is, of course, of the first consequence. A fair education has always been insisted upon, but more than this should now be demanded.

Colleges insist that applicants should pass a preliminary examination, and a certain standard must be reached or the applicant is refused. It would be a long step towards placing our profession by the side of other learned professions if all training-schools required a preliminary examination—and a pretty strict one—to determine how much intellectual capacity is possessed by the applicant, and how, up to this time, she has used her brain.

It would seem wise to have a uniform rule as to these preliminary examinations. Reading aloud should be one of the principal examinations. This will show in a very little time how much education one has had. Reading should be done from several kinds of books,—a page of history, half a page of an essay, a few verses of poetry, and following that a little discussion as to what kind of books would be thought suitable for the diversion of a sick person.

Writing from dictation shows at once several things,—quickness of understanding, character of penmanship, ability to spell and punctuate. A letter should be written. All of these examinations should be carefully marked according to a well-thought-out plan, a certain per cent. being necessary for entrance.

An examination in the first four rules of arithmetic and fractions should not be omitted. Some simple fractions should be given as mental arithmetical problems. If after a clear explanation the idea is at once comprehended, one may infer that other and more difficult problems will be quickly grasped. The ability to make out a bill or to write a check should be tested.

Such examinations can be held in classes, and it should be the superintendent of the training-school herself who should hold them. She will save herself many weary hours and much discouragement if she gives time to the early winnowing of the mass of material presented to her.

It is not possible in a training-school to give this preliminary educa-

tion, nor is it desirable. Yet with it a nurse is far better equipped for her work. How much more acceptable to an invalid or convalescent is the nurse who can read well, whose voice is well modulated, whose words fall easily and fluently from her lips, who does not hesitate at a big word or blunder over a foreign one? How pleasant it is for the sick one to have a nurse who can write necessary letters, who can make out a check, and guide the weak hand to make a proper signature?

It takes no argument to prove that an educated woman appreciates more keenly the opportunity for study than an uneducated one, and she also more quickly apprehends the greater or less degree of luxury in which she may be placed in her private nursing. She uses the costly, dainty belongings in our modern wealthy houses with a due regard for their beauty, knowing something of their worth and appreciating their artistic merit. The lack of this sense of beauty and daintiness is a frequent cause of complaint. I knew a lady who was during an illness almost frightened into a spasm by her nurse appearing with her supper served on a set of almost priceless Sèvres. The lovely blue of the china had attracted her, and, ignorant of its value, she had only sought to give her patient pleasure, whereas the sacrilege of putting actual food on these works of art made the invalid so nervous that she could not eat a thing until all the Sèvres was washed and put away in its case.

Again, a well-educated nurse will employ her vacant time between cases wisely for the benefit of future patients. She will visit picture-galleries and museums; she will read many books to find what will be good for future reading aloud; while never neglecting the "new ideas" in her technique, she will fill her mind with thoughts that are not only a help to herself, but when given out to others will make them "rise up and call her blessed."



THE New Jersey Legislature has passed a bill appropriating fifty thousand dollars for the establishment of a State sanatorium for consumptives.

THE Long Island Hospital, Boston Harbor, has a new nurses' home, which will be completed and occupied in a short time.